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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT  
No. 2383

## IWANNA PRYJMA AND ROMA PRYJMA

JULY 1, 1952.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed

Mr. WALTER, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted the following

### REPORT

[To accompany S. 2609]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to which was referred the bill (S. 2609) for the relief of Iwanna Pryjma and Roma Pryjma, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

#### PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill, is to grant the status of permanent residence in the United States to Iwanna Pryjma and Roma Pryjma. The bill provides for appropriate quota deductions and for the payment of the required visa fees and head taxes.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The beneficiaries of the bill are a widow and her daughter who are 54- and 25-year-old natives of Poland. They claim to be stateless at the present time. They last arrived in the United States as visitors on June 25, 1951. The mother is an accomplished operatic singer and pianist and the daughter is an outstanding ballet dancer. Mrs. Pryjma's husband was killed by the Nazis in 1937 and her two sons were arrested by the Communists following World War II and are now presumed to be dead. She has one brother who is a legal resident of the United States.

A letter, with attached memorandum, dated May 15, 1952, to the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary from the Deputy Attorney General with reference to the case reads as follows:

MAY 15, 1952.

Hon. PAT McCARRAN,  
*Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,  
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.*

MY DEAR SENATOR: This is in response to your request for the views of the Department of Justice relative to the bill (S. 2609) for the relief of Iwanna Pryjma and Roma Pryjma, named in the bill as Iwanna Pryjma and Roma Pryjma, aliens. The bill would grant the aliens permanent residence in the United States.

There is attached a memorandum prepared by the Immigration and Naturalization Service of this Department setting forth the facts in this case.

The quota of Poland to which the aliens are chargeable is oversubscribed and quota immigration visas are not readily obtainable. The record presents no facts which would justify the enactment of special legislation granting Mrs. Pryjma and her daughter, Roma, who are permanent residents of Canada, preferences over other aliens chargeable to the Polish quota who also desire to immigrate to this country, but who are required to remain abroad and await their turns for quota numbers.

Accordingly, this Department is unable to recommend enactment of the measure.

Sincerely,

A. DEVITT VANECH,  
*Deputy Attorney General.*

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION FROM IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION  
SERVICE FILES RE IWANNA PRYJMA AND ROMA PRYJMA, BENEFICIARIES OF  
S. 2609

Iwanna Pryjma, a widow, was born on January 19, 1898, in that part of Austria-Hungary which became part of Poland after World War I. Her daughter, Roma Pryjma, who is single, was born in Poland on March 3, 1927. Both are of the Ukrainian race and claim to be stateless. They were admitted to Canada on September 25, 1948, as immigrant displaced persons, and have since made four entries into this country as visitors. They last arrived in the United States at Rouses Point, N. Y., on June 25, 1951, and were admitted as visitors until December 24, 1951. They were granted extensions of their temporary stay until January 22, 1952. They have indicated a desire to remain permanently in this country but have never been legally admitted for permanent residence. In the event they do not depart, it will be necessary to institute deportation proceedings against them with a view to effecting their departure from the United States.

Mrs. Iwanna Pryjma, who has been a widow since 1937, earned her living as a piano and voice teacher and concert pianist before immigrating to Canada. She is supported by her daughter, Roma, who is a ballet dancer, and, occasionally, plays the accompaniments when the daughter has a recital. She was a member of the Professional Musicians Association in Europe. Other than her daughter she has no relatives in this country.

Miss Roma Pryjma stated that she was reared in Lwow, Poland, and went to Austria in July 1944, remaining there until September 1948, when she and her mother departed from Austria for Canada. She earned her living as a ballet dancer. She is a member of the American Variety Actors' Guild and belonged to a Ballet Teachers' Organization in Canada. She stated that she and her mother did not apply for extensions of stay beyond January 22, 1952, because a private bill had been introduced in the Congress for them. Miss Pryjma stated that she has no steady employment but receives new engagements every few weeks. At the time of interview in March 1952 she was employed by Leon and Eddy's in New York City for a 4 weeks' engagement.

Senator George Smathers, the author of the bill, has submitted the following information in support of the bill:

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
May 20, 1952.

## MEMORANDUM

From: The office of Senator Smathers.  
To: Senator McCarran, chairman, Committee on Judiciary.  
In re S. 2609.

Thank you very much for the copy of the Attorney General's letter and the Immigration Service's memorandum in regard to the Pryjma case.

The report of the Attorney General and the Immigration Department are obviously made up of the cold and impersonal facts having to do with birthplaces, ages, entries, visas, etc., of the Pryjmas. However, there are many facts very appealing in nature which do not appear in the Service's account.

An examination into the background of the Pryjmas reveals that Mrs. Pryjma was the daughter of a Catholic priest who lived in the Ukraine. He had her trained and educated as a singer and operatic performer and in due time she became a cultured and lovely singing star of great renown in the theaters and on the stage of eastern Europe. Her record reveals that she met with much success and brought great joy and credit to the Ukrainian people about 10 years prior to World War II. In 1924 she married a doctor who was well known throughout the Ukrainian nation as a surgeon of great ability. From this marital union there were born two children—a son and a daughter—the latter being one of the subjects of this proposed legislation. This Pryjma family was a happy, close-knit one and very religious.

When Hitler turned his Panzer divisions eastward in June of 1941 and plunged into the Ukraine on his way to Moscow, he was welcomed by the majority of the Ukrainian people because at that time they, being devoutly religious and despising the Communist dictatorship of Stalin with all their being, thought they saw in Hitler's action an opportunity to once again free their nation from tyrannical rule. The Pryjma family joined wholeheartedly in this fight to free their country, only to be subsequently disillusioned along with other Ukrainians upon learning that Hitler's tyranny was as brutal and cynical and repressive of religious freedom as was Stalin's. In this struggle of the Ukrainian people to free themselves from these twin evils which befell them, Dr. Pryjma was killed, leaving Mrs. Pryjma with the two young children. Thereafter when the Communists reestablished their dictatorship of the Ukraine Mrs. Pryjma, with the aid of friends of the underground who helped her, escaped with the children to Austria, where, under a fictitious name and with the help of loyal church people, they lived for several years. During this time she sent the daughter to the Musical Academy in Vienna where the daughter studied the ballet. When the Communist forces moved through and into Austria in 1945 and began to seek out those who had previously opposed them, Mrs. Pryjma once again tried to escape with her children. However, before that could be done Communist soldiers kidnaped her son from off the street in front of her own eyes and took him back into their area and she has neither seen nor heard from him since.

Being informed that the Communists were diligently searching for her and her daughter and realizing that their lives were in grave and constant danger, she sought safety and refuge far away from Communist influence. Again friends of her church and of the underground assisted her in escaping into the American sector of Vienna where, while hiding with friends, she made an application as a displaced person for admittance into the United States. While awaiting action on her application to the United States and in conversation with various refugee organizations, she was advised unofficially by a United States Government agent that her chances of leaving Austria quickly would be greatly improved if she applied for admission into Canada. He told her that once she was in Canada it would be a simple matter for her to proceed on into the United States as there was little or no difficulty in getting from one of these great countries into the other. With the haunting memory of her dead husband and lost son goading her to quick action to leave that land of unhappiness before another tragedy overcame her, she accepted the advice and applied for admission to Canada as a displaced person. Her application was approved and on September 25, 1948, they arrived in Canada without friends or funds. In Canada the daughter, a trained ballerina, got employment dancing at several theaters and the mother began to teach voice and piano and from these joint efforts they were able to keep body and soul together. In 1950 an agent in Montreal secured a job for Miss Pryjma in the United States with a ballet company and at that time they made an admission into the United States. While here the Pryjmas discovered there

was much greater opportunity for gainful employment than there was in Canada and they thereafter made two or three other trips fulfilling engagements in the United States. On one of the visits Mrs. Pryjma was attacked by a thief who attempted to steal her purse, jerked her off her feet and into the street where she suffered a serious and permanent injury to her spine. For many months thereafter she was completely immobilized and at the present time gets about only by the use of two canes and with great effort. However, this injury, while restricting her activity greatly, has not taken away her ability to play the piano and she continues to give lessons and teach voice and plays for certain of her daughter's performances. Since the injury to Mrs. Pryjma the primary responsibility for providing a livelihood for them both has fallen on the shoulders of the daughter, Miss Pryjma. Here in the United States Miss Pryjma has always been able to find work enabling her to gain for herself and her mother a decent living. Unfortunately, this opportunity for such employment under world conditions is not available anywhere else.

S. 2609 seeks to give these two ladies legal entry into the United States for subsequent application as permanent residents. These two ladies have been left homeless and penniless by the action of the Communists. Dr. Pryjma, the father, and the son have presumably been killed because they fought for liberty and freedom and the right to worship in a church of their own choosing. These two remaining souls have suffered unspeakable sorrow and heartache. They are the innocent and injured victims of the greed and cynicism of tyrannical Communists. They have now found haven here in the United States—a place where with their own energy and talents they can live decently and in safety. They have now made many friends in the United States. The Ukrainian Society has endorsed them in their efforts and helped them. Many prominent doctors who have come to this country from Poland and Austria know of Dr. Pryjma and are now willing to vouch for and assist Mrs. Pryjma and Miss Pryjma. Under these conditions to now throw these two women out and once again destroy what little security and happiness they have remaining appears to be a heartless and un-American act. These facts as above set out will be, we hope, beneficial to the committee in its consideration of this bill.

The committee, after consideration of all the facts in the case, is of the opinion that the bill (S. 2609) should be enacted.